

PERSONAL PAPER HOLDER AND METHOD OF USE

Background of the Invention

Field of the Invention

5 The present invention relates to reading accessories. More particularly, it relates to a compact periodical holder that can be removeably mounted on a vehicle steering wheel.

Summary of the Related Art

10 In the past, to read the paper or a magazine in a car, one would hold the magazine in one's lap, hold it up or try to prop it on the steering wheel.

There are many occasions when a driver wants to read a magazine or newspaper in the car. For example, when a driver is waiting to pick someone up, they may read. A 15 driver traveling salesman, or other worker who spends a lot of time traveling between jobs may want to read when on a break. A commuter on a car ferry or waiting for a train or bridge may want to read.

20 None of these prior art solutions adequately solves the problem of how to read in the car. Because the steering wheel is on the driver's side, it is uncomfortable and awkward to hold the book, magazine, newspaper, or other reading material on one's lap. To hold the reading material up is fatiguing on the arm.

25 Finally, to attempt to prop the reading material against the steering wheel does not work well since the reading material slides down and can buckle and fold.

It is an object of the present invention to provide a compact, lightweight transportable periodical holder for use in a vehicle.

30 **Summary of the Invention**

The present invention is a periodical holder for use in a vehicle. The preferred holder attaches to the lower third of the steering wheel of a vehicle. The holder is a telescoping or folding shelf. The base serves as a ledge on which the reading material rests. The reading material can then be propped against the steering wheel 35 for easy readability. The reader's arms are not fatigued and the steering wheel assists in holding the reading material rather than being an obstruction.

Brief Description of the Figures

Objects and advantages of the invention will become apparent upon reading the detailed description and upon reference to the drawings.

Figure 1 is a front elevation view of one embodiment of the present invention in use.

5 Figure 2A is a front elevation view of an alternative embodiment of the present invention.

Figure 2B is a cross sectional view along line B-B of Figure 2A.

Figure 2C is a top view of Figure 2A.

10 Figure 3 is a front elevation view of an alternative embodiment of the present invention.

Figure 4A is a front elevation view of an alternative embodiment of the present invention.

Figure 4B is a cross sectional view along line B-B of Figure 2A.

15 Figure 5 is a front elevation view of an alternative embodiment of the present invention.

Figure 6 is a front elevation view of an alternative embodiment of the present invention.

Figure 7 is a front view of the embodiment of Figure 3 in use.

20 Figure 8A – 8F are cross sectional views of alternative embodiments of the present invention.

Figure 9A is a first longitudinal sectional view of the embodiment of Figure 3.

Figure 9B is an alternative longitudinal sectional view of the embodiment of Figure 3.

Figure 10A – 10B is an alternative embodiment of the present invention.

Figure 11 is a cross-sectional view of the embodiment of Figure 8C untelescoped.

25 Figure 12A-C is an alternative embodiment of the invention.

Figure 13A-C is an alternative embodiment of the invention.

Figure 14 is a longitudinal cross section of an alternative embodiment of Figure 3.

Figure 15A-F are cross sections of the periodical holder showing various attachment apparatuses and devices.

30 Figure 16 is a top view of an alternative embodiment of the shelf.

Figure 17 is a clipboard for attachment to the shelf of Figure 15.

Figure 18 is a lamp for attachment to the shelf of Figure 16.

While the invention will be described in connection with the preferred embodiment, it
35 is understood that it is not intended to limit the invention. The invention is intended

to cover all alternatives, modifications and equivalents as may be included within the spirit and scope of the invention.

5 **Detailed Description of the Invention**

The present invention is a compact, lightweight, transportable periodical holder.

On occasion drivers have a need to read in the car. The driver may be waiting to pick someone or something up. The driver may spend a lot of time in the car commuting and want to read, for example as they are transported by ferry. The driver may spend his or her day traveling between jobs and as a result take his or her breaks in the vehicle. In each of these cases, as well as many others, the driver may want to read in the car while he is stopped.

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15 People who read regularly in their cars find the drivers seat is not well suited for reading the paper or other periodical, such as a magazine. It is cramped, the steering wheel is in the way, and the periodical must be held in ones hand, limiting the ability to do other tasks. Other tasks might include eating, drinking, writing a note, talking on a cell phone and putting on make up.

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25 Turning now to Figure 1 a first embodiment of the periodical holder 100 is shown. The periodical holder 100 is a shelf 2 that is removeably mounted on a steering wheel 6 of a vehicle (not shown). A periodical 8 is placed on the shelf 2 leaving the driver's (not shown) hands free.

30 Steering wheels 6 are not all the same size. Further, drivers often drive more than one vehicle. Preferably, the periodical holder 100 is compact, lightweight and adjustable.

35 In the preferred embodiment, the periodical holder 10 telescopes allowing it to be used with a variety of steering wheels. Further, this allows the periodical holder to be compact and easily transportable.

Turning now to Figures 2A-B, one method of attaching the periodical holder 100 to the steering wheel 6 is shown. Shelf 2 may have one or more hooks 12 that hook on

to the top lower edge 6a of the steering wheel 6. The hooks preferably are somewhat elastic to adjust for various steering wheels. Alternatively, the hooks 12 may be formed of rigid material. A rigid hook preferably has a flexible and/or stretchable connection to the shelf 2 to provide for adjustments.

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Figure 2B is a cross section along line B-B of Figure 2A. The shelf 2 has a channel 28 to keep the periodical 8 in place. A periodical 8 set on the shelf leans against the steering wheel and remains upright.

10 Preferably, the shelf is wide enough to allow the periodical to lean against the steering wheel, but not so wide as to contact the driver. The periodical holder 100 of Figure 2A is depicted in top view of Figure 2C.

15 The periodical holder 100 of Figures 3 and 7 shows a telescoping shelf and the preferred hook and loop attachment device. The shelf 2 has at least two shelf segments 4. The shelf segments 4 nests within one another. Shelf segments 4 nest inside one another. The periodical holder 100 is attached to the steering wheel 6 by at least one and preferably two hook and loop ribbons 10. The ribbons 10 are preferably threaded through at least one passage 22 in the shelf 2. The ribbons are wrapped around the steering wheel. Alternatively, the attachment could wrap all the way around the shelf 2 as shown in Figure 5. This is not preferred as it limits the size 20 of the periodical 8 that can be placed on the holder 100.

25 Turning now to Figure 4A and 4B an alternative attachment device is shown. The attachment device 11 is an open sleeve 18 that snaps securely on to the steering wheel 6. Alternatively, a clamp (not shown) or other attachment device could be used.

30 Turning to Figure 6 an alternative embodiment of the periodical holder 100 is shown. The shelf 2 is attached at an angle to the steering wheel 6. The periodical 8 rests in the space between the steering wheel 6 and the shelf 2.

35 Turning now to Figures 8A-F, cross sectional views several embodiments of the shelf 2 are shown. The shelf 2 has a base 20. The shelf optionally has a back 24. The back and/or edge of the base may have a contour 25 as seen in Figure 14C.

The back 24 may be slanted as shown in Figure 8E to help keep the periodical 8 leaning against the steering wheel. To help keep the periodical 8 in place it is preferable if the shelf 2 has a channel 28 or a lip 26. The channel can have many 5 different profiles. For example, the channel could be v-shaped, curved, or u-shaped, or it could have a flat or angled sides, a flat bottom. Examples of profiles can be seen in Figure 8B and 8F. Alternatively, a curved shelf 30 can be used to help keep the periodical 8 in place.

10 The shelf 2 is preferably constructed of an inexpensive lightweight material such as plastic. Alternatively, it can be made with different materials such as metal, wood, fiberglass or a combination of materials.

15 Turning now to Figures 9A-9B, a telescoping shelf 2 is shown. In Figure 9A-9B, the shelf 2 telescopes from both ends. The shelf 2 has five shelf segments 4, although it could have a larger or smaller number of segments 4. Figure 10A-B shows a shelf that telescopes from one end and has three segments 4. The segments preferably have stops that prevent the segments 4 from coming apart. The stops also allow for adjustment of the length of the shelf 2.

20 The stops can be constructed by any known method. Preferably, the stop 40 is integral with the segments 4. For example, a tooth 42 could mate with an indentation 42 in the barrel of the segment 4 or a knob 46 could mate with a recesses 47. Alternatively, the stop could be separate from the segments 4. There 25 could be aperatures in the segments and/or a key 49 could be inserted in the aperatures to keep two segments connected.

Figure 11 is a cross section of a collapsed telescoping shelf 2.

30 Figures 12A-C show an alternative embodiment of the inventive shelf 2. The segments 4 are pivotably connected, such as by a pin 52. The segments 4 unfold to form the shelf 2. The shelf 4 can be maintained in folded position. Preferably, the hook and loop closure 10 is wrapped around the folded segments 4 while folded.

Figures 13A-C show an alternative embodiment of the inventive shelf 2. The shelf has two or more hinged segments 4. The hinge 50 allows the segments to be folded. Preferably, the hinges 50 provide stability when the shelf 2 is open. Alternatively, a strap (not shown) or other mechanism can be used to provide stability in the open
5 position.

Figure 14 is an alternative embodiment of the present invention. The shelf 2 both folds and telescopes to allow it to fold into an extremely compact form for easy transporting between vehicles. Also, this would allow the shelf to be stored in a glove
10 box without taking up much space.

Figures 15A-F show cross section views of the shelf 2 with some exemplary passages 22 in the shelf for connecting the shelf to the steering wheel 6. The shelf preferably has at least two passages 22, each one closer to an end of the shelf 1 than the
15 middle of the shelf 2. The hook 12, hook and loop ribbon 10, an elastic 11 or other attachment, including but not limited to string, robe, a belt, and tape can be threaded through the passage 22 and wrapped around the steering wheel 6.

In another embodiment, patches of hook and/or loop material are placed on the
20 shelf. Hook and loop ribbons are wrapped around the steering wheel at any desired position. The shelf is then secured to the steering wheel by the hook and/or loop patches and the hook and loop ribbon. In another embodiment a snap or other mechanical attachment device is on the shelf. A strap, or pair of straps, with a mating piece is secured to the steering wheel. The shelf is attached to the steering
25 wheel by snapping the snaps.

More preferably, the shelf 2 has a pair of passages 22 close to each end of the shelf
2. The hook and loop ribbon 10, the elastic 11 or other attachment device are
30 threaded through the pair of passages, to provide a more secure connection to the steering wheel 6. The elastic may have a button and a slot through which the button passes. The elastic 11 provides enough give to allow the shelf to be secured to a variety of steering wheels. The elastic 11 may be any suitable elastic, rubber, or other stretchable material.

Turning now to Figures 16, 17 and 18, the shelf 2 may have an accessory slot 102 for attaching a variety of accessories such a clipboard 104, light 106, clock or timer. Preferably, the accessory has a support 108 that mates with the slot 102. Alternatively, the light 106 or other accessory could be clamped to the shelf 2. The 5 shelf 2 could have a indentation (not shown) for a coffee cup or other drink.